



**Agenda—August 23, 2012
2pm, Academic Affairs Conference RM 239**

- I. Consideration of May 10, 2012, and July 12, 2012, minutes.
- II. New Business
 - A. Report from Graduate Dean
 - B. Proposals
 - a. Proposal to revise admission requirements for master's programs
 - b. Proposal to revise Undergraduate Student Seeking Graduate Enrollment policy
 - c. Proposal to revise Thesis, Specialist Project, or Dissertation policy
 - d. Proposal to revise Maintaining Matriculation
 - C. For discussion
 - a. Request to place query regarding criminal record on application
 - b. Change in program proposal formatting with regards to collecting admission materials
 - c. Academic dismissal for students who fall below a GPA of 3.0
 - d. Graduate Faculty Status
 - e. Graduate Assistantship policy
- III. Adjournment

**Office of Graduate Studies
Proposal to Revise an Academic Policy
(Action Item)**

Contact Person: Kelly Madole, kelly.madole@wku.edu, 270-745-2446

1. Identification of proposed policy revision: Clarify the minimum requirements for admission to master's level programs.

**2. Catalog statement of existing policy:
Admission Requirements-Master's Degrees**

1. Submit a completed application, along with a \$40.00 (non-refundable) application fee by the admission deadline;
2. Have completed a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university (applicants from non-accredited institutions: see Applicants from Non-Regionally Accredited Institutions);
3. Have adequate preparation in the field of specialization;
4. Submit a copy of teaching certification or statement of eligibility for students holding current certification;
5. Submit qualifying standardized test scores, if required by the specific program (applicants to the MBA Program must have a GMAT score of 500 and a GAP score of 1050); and
6. Appropriate language training or test scores for international students.

**3. Catalog statement of proposed policy:
Admission Requirements-Master's Degrees**

1. Submit a completed application, along with a \$40.00 (non-refundable) application fee by the admission deadline;
2. Have completed a bachelor's degree **or higher** from an accredited college or university (applicants from non-accredited institutions: see Applicants from Non-Regionally Accredited Institutions);
3. Have adequate preparation in the field of specialization;
4. Submit a copy of teaching certification or statement of eligibility for students holding current certification;
5. Submit qualifying standardized test scores, if required by the specific program (applicants to the MBA Program must have a GMAT score of 500 and a GAP score of 1050); and
6. Appropriate language training or test scores for international students.

4. Rationale for proposed policy revision:

Occasionally, a student with a professional degree will apply to a master's program; however, some professional degrees do not require bachelor degrees for admission and completion. These professional degrees often require substantial prerequisite courses and coursework toward the completion of the degree that provide the necessary foundation for success at the graduate level. This policy would allow students holding higher level professional degrees.

5. Impact of proposed policy revision on existing academic or non-academic policies:

None anticipated.

6. Proposed term for implementation: Winter 2013

7. Dates of prior committee approvals:

Graduate Council	_____
University Senate	_____
Provost	_____

**Office of Graduate Studies
Proposal to Revise an Academic Policy
(Action Item)**

Contact Person: Kelly Madole, kelly.madole@wku.edu, 270-745-2446

1. Identification of proposed policy revision: Allow exception to limit of 15 hours of registration in the Undergraduate Student Enrollment in Graduate Courses policy for students in approved Joint Undergraduate-Masters Programs.

2. Catalog statement of existing policy:

Students may enroll in no more than 15 hours of coursework (graduate and undergraduate combined) in any semester in which enrollment in graduate-level courses occurs.

3. Catalog statement of proposed policy:

Students may enroll in no more than 15 hours of coursework (graduate and undergraduate combined) in any semester in which enrollment in graduate-level courses occurs, **unless the student is enrolled in an approved Joint Undergraduate-Masters Program. If enrolled in an approved Joint Undergraduate-Masters Program, students may enroll in a maximum of 15 graduate-level hours and are subject to the undergraduate course load restrictions.**

4. Rationale for proposed policy revision:

Joint Undergraduate-Masters Programs are designed for a limited number of excellent students to complete an undergraduate degree and a Masters degree in a five-year period. In order to complete both degrees in a this time frame, students, who are still classified as undergraduates, may need to take slightly more than 15 hours while also enrolled in graduate programs. These programs will have rigorous admission criteria, close mentoring and highly structured curricula in order to preclude the possibility that students will enroll in coursework that is beyond their capabilities.

Only point 4 in the Undergraduate Student Enrollment in Graduate Courses policy is being revised. The remainder of the policy will remain intact.

5. Impact of proposed policy revision on existing academic or non-academic policies:

None anticipated.

6. Proposed term for implementation: Winter 2013

7. Dates of prior committee approvals:

Graduate Council	_____
University Senate	_____
Provost	_____

**Office of Graduate Studies
Proposal to Revise an Academic Policy
(Action Item)**

Contact Person: Kelly Madole, kelly.madole@wku.edu, 270-745-2446

1. Identification of proposed policy revision: Change maximum allowable hours and grading policy for thesis and dissertation courses.

2. Catalog statement of existing policy:

The program of a student pursuing the master's thesis or specialist project must contain 6 hours of credit in 599-Thesis Research and Writing or in 699-Specialist Project. Students in the Doctor of Educational Leadership program must have 12 hours of credit in EDAD 799-Dissertation Research.

3. Catalog statement of proposed policy:

The program of a student pursuing the master's thesis or specialist project must contain **at least** 6 hours of credit in 599-Thesis Research and Writing or in 699-Specialist Project. Students in the Doctor of Educational Leadership program must have **at least** 12 hours of credit in EDAD 799-Dissertation Research.

Students who have finished required coursework, but who will be making use of university facilities, or personnel in order to complete a thesis must register for 599-Thesis Research and Writing, 699-Specialist Project, or 799-Dissertation Research as appropriate. Individual programs may limit the number of thesis hours that can be applied to a program of study.

During the time that the thesis or dissertation is in progress but not yet completed, the thesis director should submit a grade of IP. Upon completion of all requirements for the thesis the thesis director should request that the grades of IP be changed to grades of P (Pass). If the thesis project is deemed to be of unacceptable quality by the thesis director, then the grades of IP should be changed to grades of F (Fail).

4. Rationale for proposed policy revision:

The current policy is ambiguous, but has been interpreted to mean that students can take *no more than* 6 hours of thesis hours. This limit is problematic for students who complete their required coursework but who have not yet finished the thesis. Concerns have been raised that allowing more than 6 hours of thesis credits might inflate student grade point averages. A review of a subset of our benchmark institutions failed to find any other institution that provided standard grades for thesis hours. In addition, at the majority of institutions, limits on the maximum number of thesis hours allowed in a program of study are provided at the program level.

5. Impact of proposed policy revision on existing academic or non-academic policies:

Departments with 599/699/799 courses with standard letter grading would be required to change the grading for these courses to pass/fail. The Office of Graduate Studies and Research will complete these forms on behalf of the department and submit them to the Registrar when the policy is approved.

Historically, maintaining matriculation (600/700/800) would have been used for students working on their theses/specialist projects/dissertations. The policy governing maintaining matriculation is being revised into the Continuous Enrollment policy.

6. Proposed term for implementation: Winter 2013

7. Dates of prior committee approvals:

Graduate Council

University Senate

Provost

**Office of Graduate Studies
Proposal to Revise an Academic Policy
(Action Item)**

Contact Person: Kelly Madole, kelly.madole@wku.edu, 270-745-2446

1. **Identification of proposed policy revision:** Revise the maintaining matriculation policy
2. **Catalog statement of existing policy:**

Maintaining Matriculation

If the thesis, specialist, or dissertation project is not completed during the initial period of registration for this credit, the student must maintain matriculation until the thesis or project has been submitted and approved. To maintain matriculation, the student must register for 600 (thesis), 700 (project), or 800 (dissertation) during any semester or summer term in which he/she will be actively pursuing the thesis/project or will be submitting it for approval. Enrollment in matriculation courses does not result in a grade or credit toward any degree or non-degree program.

3. **Catalog statement of proposed policy:**

Continuous Enrollment

All students enrolled in graduate degree programs must enroll each regular semester for a minimum of one graduate credit hour. This registration must continue with no breaks from enrollment in the first graduate program course to graduation. This policy does not include summer sessions.

It is preferable that students enroll in courses relevant to their graduate program to facilitate timely completion. If it is not possible to do so, however, The Graduate School has established a one-credit continuous enrollment course, GRST 600. The tuition for this course is \$50.00. Enrollment in GRST 600 does not result in a grade or credit toward any degree or non-degree program.

GRAD 600. Continuance.

1 credit.

To remain in good standing in their program, all graduate students must maintain continuous enrollment each semester in their program from entry until graduation. This course allows those students who are not intending to register for any other courses during the current semester to continue in their program in good standing. Course may be repeated as needed.

Exemption from the Continuous Enrollment Requirement

It is possible to receive an approval for a leave of absence which exempts students from the Continuous Enrollment requirement.

A Leave of absence is granted in individual cases when the student demonstrates sufficient cause (e.g., illness, or other personal circumstances). A request for this type of leave must be submitted by the student in writing (electronic mail is sufficient), indicating the reason(s). The student's request must be approved by the graduate program director of the student's program and the dean of The Graduate School.

This leave is granted for a specified time period that may not exceed three semesters total, excluding summer session. In no case may on-leave status exceed this maximum throughout the student's entire degree program. When a student on leave plans to resume graduate study, he or she must inform the graduate program director and The Graduate School at least 30 days prior to the first class day of the return semester.

A graduate student who takes an unapproved break in registration by failing to maintain continuous enrollment or by failing to obtain a Leave of Absence: Continuous Enrollment exemption will relinquish his or her graduate standing in the university. Students who wish to be reinstated will be required to file an Application for Graduate Admission and pay the application fee.

4. Rationale for proposed policy revision:

Policy clarifies when continuous enrollment is necessary and eliminates the ambiguous Maintaining Matriculation policy. Continuous enrollment would extend to all graduate students at WKU. A vast majority of institutions and all WKU benchmarks require continuous enrollment to be a graduate student in good standing. Requiring continuous enrollment would solve a number of policy and administrative related issues caused by lapses in enrollment as well.

5. Impact of proposed policy revision on existing academic or non-academic policies:

All changes that are needed to bring other policies in line with this are being concurrently submitted. The GRST 600 course proposal will be submitted with the second reading of this policy.

6. Proposed term for implementation: Winter 2013

7. Dates of prior committee approvals:

Graduate Council	_____
University Senate	_____
Provost	_____

**Office of Graduate Studies
For Discussion**

Contact Person: Kelly Madole, kelly.madole@wku.edu, 270-745-2446

Issue: The university counsel has asked that Graduate Studies consider querying criminal background as part of our graduate school application. I would like a recommendation from the Graduate Council on this request. Should Graduate Studies include this on our graduate school applications?

Additional Relevant Information:

1. Questions included on the undergraduate application.
2. Excerpt from *Essentials of Graduate Admissions* published by the Council of Graduate Schools.
3. Information from University Counsel

1. Questions Included on Undergraduate Application

Enter the Additional Information requested. This additional information is required when considering your application. If you answer **"Yes"** to either of these questions, you will be required to provide an explanation. If you do not provide an explanation, your application will not be considered complete until this information is received. When completing sections, select "Return to Checklist" to save your changes and display the Application Checklist. To progress to the next section, please select "Continue". "Finish Later" saves your changes and displays the Application Menu.

- indicates a required field.

Have you ever been suspended from high school or any other school, college or university? (Yes or No)

If "YES", please explain in detail. Your application cannot be processed without an explanation. (Please include dates and circumstances)

Have you ever been arrested or convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation or is a criminal charge other than a minor traffic violation pending against you? (Yes or No)

If "YES", please explain in detail. Your application cannot be processed without an explanation. (Please include dates and circumstances).

termine whether they are still necessary, and to make refinements when needed. Race or ethnicity should be one of many factors that an institution considers when selecting among its applicants, and all applicants should be viewed using a unitary process that evaluates each applicant on all of the criteria the institution deems important. Also, it is clear that programs that base eligibility on the basis of race are more legally suspect than programs that are open to all but may give a preference to members of certain minority groups.

The Court has endorsed a "holistic" approach to admissions decision-making among those institutions that practice affirmative action. Hallmarks of this approach are: clearly established admissions criteria and goals that are consistent with the institution's mission; and a full-file review for each applicant, which considers all of the institution's admissions criteria. Also, institutions should consider forms of diversity beyond racial and ethnic diversity, and thoroughly examine each file for evidence of a potential contribution to the rich range of ideas and viewpoints that should characterize a diverse student body. Graduate schools may seek diversity within incoming classes on the basis of a range of factors that contribute to students' background experiences and intellectual development of particular points of view. For example, schools may seek to enroll students from different political viewpoints, geographic origins (urban/rural, domestic/ international), religious affiliation, socio-economic status, undergraduate institutions attended, work and volunteer experience, and many other factors.

The law concerning affirmative action (both in admissions and in related areas) is still developing, and changes in the law can occur rather quickly. In developing or refining any type of affirmative action program, it is essential to involve university counsel.

Application Forms. When designing an application form, several factors must be taken into consideration. Various federal statutes and regulations require universities to include some specific kinds of information, and prohibit them from asking applicants certain questions or place conditions on the circumstances under which requests for some information may be made. Universities are required to include a statement of nondiscrimination on the basis of race and sex on all literature dealing with admissions. Federal law also requires universities to include, somewhere in their general information for applicants, contact information for the office that provides services to students with disabilities and for the office that maintains campus crime statistics.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibit pre-admission inquiries about disabilities,

although such information may be asked after admission, on a voluntary basis. The application form cannot inquire about marital status nor can it ask the applicant to give her maiden name. Public institutions that ask an applicant to provide his or her Social Security number (SSN) must indicate that providing the number is voluntary *and* provide enough information about how the number will be used that an applicant can make an informed decision about whether to supply it. Several states have prohibited colleges and universities from using the SSN as the student ID number or otherwise publishing it. Therefore, universities all across the country, even in states without such a prohibition, will receive transcripts and letters of recommendations on behalf of applicants that do not bear a Social Security number. In addition, many states have laws governing the handling and storage of the SSN (e.g., in encrypted format with partial-number displays on screens and documents) that require the attention of information technology personnel. An emerging best practice in this area is to ask the applicant for his or her undergraduate student ID number or the GRE (or other testing program's) account number rather than the Social Security number.⁸

Questions about race and ethnicity are permissible under federal law, but should be accompanied by a statement indicating that responses are voluntary. In addition to the usual check-boxes, questions regarding race and ethnicity should include an "other" category or an open-ended opportunity for an applicant to describe him or herself. Many universities have chosen to mirror the Department of Education's race and ethnicity reporting format on their applications. This is a convenient, but not a required, format for collecting this information. Indeed, many universities find that using more refined categories is helpful to their programmatic goals. Public institutions in states where affirmative action is not permissible may, however, best be served by not including a question about race or ethnicity on the application form.

Although this section has described limitations on including certain kinds of questions on an application form, it is important to remember that questions seeking the same kinds of information during an in-person interview also carry similar restrictions. Understanding these limitations and restrictions is particularly relevant to graduate admissions personnel and faculty decision-makers, as interviews often play a key role in the graduate admissions process.

Student Behavior. A developing legal issue in the admissions arena relates to the liability of the institution for acts of its students. In 1986, a public

⁸ Note that the Federal government requires applicants for Federal financial aid to provide their SSN on the application for financial aid. As a result, many programs have chosen to have separate admissions and financial aid applications.

institution was found liable for admitting as a student an ex-felon who engaged in additional problematic behavior as a student. The university was not aware of the student's extensive criminal record.

Many states do not have law relating specifically to the admission of candidates with prior criminal histories. As a result, this issue is a matter of policy for institutions in such states. Different institutions have and will continue to adopt different policies and practices. Some may adopt a blanket prohibition on the enrollment of students with certain kinds of histories, while others will adopt a policy of case-by-case review and determination. As with all matters covered in this Legal Issues section, policies and practices should be adopted or modified in consultation with university counsel.

For programs that include a required externship or clinical experience, or that typically lead to licensure or external certification, there will be additional considerations. In the former case, a program may choose to deny admission to applicants who cannot successfully complete the academic program because they will be ineligible to participate in required externship or clinical components. In the latter case, it may be legally more problematic for a program to deny admission on the basis of a post-degree, external licensing requirement. In both cases, universities best serve candidates by making any programmatic or licensure requirements known to all applicants, so that they can make informed decisions about whether to seek admission.

It is generally permissible for an institution to make pre-admission inquiries about prior criminal records although some state statutes prohibit discriminating against persons convicted of criminal offenses. In formulating criteria for rejecting applicants with criminal records, consideration should be given to the nature of the criminal activity and its relationship to a campus environment, the elapsed time since the crime was committed, and the rehabilitation efforts of the applicant. Because state law governs inquiries about prior criminal behavior, and the weight a university may attach to the information it receives, it is particularly important to work with university counsel in drafting application questions and admissions policies in this area.

The Buckley Amendment/FERPA. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), popularly known as the Buckley Amendment, generally provides access rights of enrolled students to their admissions records, except for confidential recommendations for which a valid waiver to the right of access has been signed by the student. Admitted students have the right to see comments written about them by admissions officers, whether these notes are kept separate from the student's permanent record or not. Some universities routinely destroy reports prepared by their admissions offices

once students are admitted, which is permissible as long as the student has requested access to this material before it was destroyed.⁹ Other institutions choose to keep admissions comments for assessment purposes; to check if a prediction about a student's potential matched his or her actual performance.

The FERPA provisions do not apply to unsuccessful applicants, to applicants who do not enroll, or to applicants applying to a different program at an institution they have already attended. Nevertheless, it is possible that a law or an institution's own privacy and confidentiality policies provide privacy protections for information about applicants who are denied admission or who do not enroll. It is important, therefore, to understand the privacy of confidentiality an institution is making to its applicants, and to train personnel who have access to applicant information about its implementation.

Since the Buckley Amendment does not govern records of a person who has not attended an institution, many institutions choose to destroy, after a designated period of time (e.g., three years), application files of students who were not accepted or who did not attend. Keeping the applicant's record for this period of time is useful in case of a complaint by a disappointed applicant or in case of a review by an outside agency. Once again, decisions about what information to retain, and how long to retain it, are best made in consultation with university counsel.

Fraudulent Applications. If a student submits a fraudulent application or she may have the offer of admission rescinded or, if already in attendance, be subject to dismissal from the university. It is helpful to explain the consequences to candidates at the application stage. If the student has been enrolled, an opportunity to rebut the decision in writing constitutes sufficient action to satisfy due process requirements. At public institutions, if the student has commenced studies, he or she is entitled to a formal written notice of the charges, an opportunity to rebut the charges, an opportunity to retain the services of counsel at any hearing, confront the accusers, present evidence on his or her behalf, and receive a record of the hearing which took place before an unbiased disciplinary board. Private institutions do not have to follow due process procedures in dismissing students with fraudulent applications; however, they must follow their own published procedures in such a case, and those procedures must provide the applicant with "fundamental fairness," which has come to mean, in essence, notice of the matter and an opportunity to present information or arguments on his or her own behalf.

Although one should be aware of potential legal problems, few

⁹ *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, "Students Have Right to See Comments of Admissions Officers, Education Department Rules," Volume XXXVIII, Number 30, April 1, 1992, p. A1.